A visit to Ramsden Hillview Primary School by Ademurewa Adesokan (Monday July 21st, 2014)

The four children – Taylor and Flora Perry, along with Arimyriah and Arigbeniri Adhikari – were fast asleep in the double bed they shared in a large bedroom. Mr Robert Carter entered the room quietly but firmly and began waking them up.

“Good morning, you four,” he said brightly, with a warm smile. “It’s a very special day. You’re going to visit your new school!”

Taylor rubbed his eyes sleepily and asked, “Which school?”

“Ramsden Hillview Primary School in Orpington,” Mr Carter replied. “You’ll spend half the day there to get a feel for it before starting in September.”

Flora, more awake now, asked eagerly, “What classes will we be in when we start?”

Mr Carter explained, “Flora, Taylor, and Arimyriah will be in Rose Class – a specialist provision class for juniors. Arigbeniri, you’ll be in Clover Class, which caters for Early Years, Infants, and some Year 3 pupils.”

Arimyriah’s curiosity got the better of her. “What’s the uniform like? What colour is it? Are ties compulsory? What colour are the summer dresses? When do we start and finish school?”

Smiling, Mr Carter shook his head. “The uniform is burgundy – a mix of purple and red. Yes, there are ties, introduced last academic year, but they’re optional. Reception children in particular don’t need to wear them, as tying them can be tricky. For those who do wear ties, juniors who can tie them independently use traditional ones, while clip-on ties are available for others.

“You can wear burgundy cardigans, V-neck jumpers, or crew-neck sweatshirts, with or without a tie. Formal shirts, polo shirts, or revere-collared shirts, whether short- or long-sleeved, are all acceptable. Summer dresses are red, though playsuits or polo shirts with checked red and white skirts are common. Striped dresses are rare and discouraged. Today, you’ll start at 8:55 am and finish at 12:15 pm. From September, you’ll start at 8:55 am and finish at 3:00 pm, although the mainstream juniors and

some Rose Class pupils, especially in Year 5 and 6 may stay for ‘Review’ until 3:20 pm.”

“What’s ‘Review’?” Arigbeniri asked, puzzled.

“It’s a 20-minute end-of-day session,” Mr Carter replied. “It’s held in houses rather than classes – Garnet, Emerald, Sapphire, and Topaz – and is mostly for junior pupils. They do short educational activities, and a pupil ends the session with a prayer.”

Flora then asked, “Will you be working at the school?”

Mr Carter nodded. “Yes, starting this September, I’ll teach 3R, replacing Miss Stejskal, who’s returning to Ireland. I’ll work there every weekday except Thursdays, as I’ll be attending a course to support my teaching.”

Arimyriah chimed in, “How far is the school? And how do we get there each day?”

“The school is about 15-20 minutes away, a bit far from here in Shortlands to Orpington,” Mr Carter explained. “You’ll have transport arranged to take you there and back. Now, enough chit-chat! Rochelle, please come and pray with the children on this special day.”

Rochelle Perry entered the room, dressed in violet pyjamas adorned with yellow flowers. “In Jesus’ name,” she began.

The children responded in unison, “Amen!”

After a heartfelt prayer and sharing the grace, their mum and dad took over.

“You’ve had your chat with Mr Carter,” said Mum. “Now it’s time to get ready for the visit. Let’s head to the bathroom.”

The family’s maisonette bathroom was modest, with a washbasin and a bathtub, both missing plugs. The Adhikari children took turns bathing under their mum’s supervision, while Rochelle helped Taylor and Flora brush their teeth. Then they swapped, ensuring everyone was clean and fresh.

Back in their room, Mum and Rochelle helped the children dress. Flora and Arimyriah, being practical, asked if they could wear their summer dresses.

“Not today,” Rochelle said firmly. “I know it’s the middle of summer, but you’re visiting a new school. You need to look formal, so you’ll wear your winter uniforms. You can wear your summer dresses tomorrow.”

The girls didn’t argue and dressed as instructed. Taylor wore a white short-sleeved formal shirt, grey shorts, a royal blue school jumper, grey socks, and black double-fastening shoes, accessorised with a sky-blue analogue watch. Flora wore a white

short sleeved revere-collared shirt, a grey skirt, a royal blue cardigan, white socks, and black loafers, along with her signature pink digital watch, gold earrings, and a gold hairband with a bow on her left ear. Arimyriah wore a white polo shirt, grey skirt, a red cardigan, white socks, black Mary Jane shoes, and silver earrings. Arigbeniri wore a white polo shirt, grey shorts, a red sweatshirt, grey socks and black double-fastening and small red-rimmed glasses.

Rochelle brushed Taylor and Flora’s strawberry blonde hair, tying Flora’s into her usual low pigtails, before stepping back to admire the four children. “You’re all ready for your big day,” she said proudly.

The early morning sun filtered through the kitchen window, casting a warm glow across the room. The four children—Taylor, Flora, Arimyriah, and Arigbeniri—bustled into the kitchen, their faces lighting up at the sight of their colourful plates waiting on the counter. Mum stood near the stove, her apron tied snugly, holding a spatula as she called out, “Come and collect your food!”

Each plate bore a portion of golden, straight chips drizzled with ketchup. The plates themselves seemed to match the children’s personalities: Taylor’s light blue plate, calm and steady; Flora’s

vibrant orange, lively and spirited; Arimyriah’s pink plate, delicate yet bold; and Arigbeniri’s green plate, playful and full of energy.

Rochelle, perched nearby with her usual nurturing air, chimed in with a gentle reminder, “Be careful of your clothes when you are eating. You need to go to school looking neat. If you accidently spill ketchup or orange juice on your clothes, do not panic. Just let us know, and we will get you changed in no time.”

The children eagerly picked up their plates, the warm aroma of freshly cooked chips mingling with the tangy scent of ketchup. Juice cups sat ready beside the plates—cool orange juice sparkling under the morning light. Soon, the sound of clinking cutlery and cheerful chatter filled the air as they began to eat.

Meanwhile, Mr. Carter entered the room, dressed smartly in a brown cardigan over a dark blue shirt, with a dark red tie neatly knotted at his neck. His black trousers with white pinstripes and polished black shoes completed his attire, but the most striking feature was the black sleeveless coat slung over his shoulders and the tattered green backpack hanging from his shoulder—a relic of years past, worn but reliable.

“Children,” he announced warmly, “I am off to school now to meet my new class, Class 3R. I will see you later, so take care of yourselves!”

The children barely looked up from their plates, engrossed in their breakfast, but they chorused a muffled “Goodbye!” through mouthfuls of chips. Mr. Carter gave Rochelle a quick nod before stepping out of the maisonette. The front door clicked shut behind him, and the faint sound of his footsteps echoed down the stairs.

Outside, Dad’s silver 2003 Jaguar X-Type saloon awaited him, gleaming faintly in the morning sun. Mr. Carter slid into the driver’s seat, started the engine with a low purr, and drove off toward Orpington, ready for the day ahead.

The kitchen was alive with the clatter of plates and cheerful chatter as the children enjoyed their breakfast. The air smelled of crispy chips and tangy ketchup, blending with the citrusy aroma of fresh orange juice. Each child sat contentedly with their colourful plate, savouring the simple joy of their meal.

Suddenly, a shrill voice broke the calm.

“MUMMY?” Arimyriah called out, her tone tinged with panic.

Mum, ever alert, hurried into the room. “What is the matter, my dear?” she asked gently, kneeling down to her daughter’s level.

Arimyriah looked down, her eyes wide with distress. Her pristine white polo shirt now bore the glaring evidence of her mishap—a bright red streak of ketchup accompanied by a spreading orange juice stain. The vibrant colours seemed to taunt her from the fabric, their boldness impossible to ignore.

Mum examined the stains with the precision of a detective. “Oh dear,” she said, shaking her head, “we cannot let this stay, or it will be a stubborn mess later.” She placed a reassuring hand on Arimyriah’s shoulder and added warmly, “Let us get you sorted, sweetheart.”

Taking Arimyriah’s hand, she led her to the small laundry room tucked away at the corner of the maisonette. The room smelled faintly of detergent and fresh linen. Mum opened the wardrobe where a neat row of clean polo shirts hung like sentinels. She carefully selected one and turned back to her daughter.

“Arms up,” Mum instructed. Arimyriah obeyed, her face lighting up as her mother expertly swapped the stained shirt for a fresh, clean one.

“Thank you, Mummy!” Arimyriah chirped, her earlier worry forgotten.

Mum smiled warmly. “Thank goodness you called me right away,” she said, folding the stained shirt. “If we had let the stain linger, it would have been much harder to deal with.”

With the crisis averted, the pair returned to the sitting room. Arimyriah skipped in with renewed energy, her clean shirt a

proud emblem of her restored composure. Mum followed close behind, her heart warmed by her daughter’s gratitude and trust.

The morning light danced through the windows, painting the room in soft, golden hues as the children, each dressed in their vibrant summer jackets, gathered near the smaller bedroom. Taylor, with his royal blue sleeveless coat, stood tall, looking every bit the ready adventurer. Flora, in her fluffy black sleeveless jacket, looked like a bundle of warmth and energy. Arimyriah, her summer rose-coloured jacket glistening like a spring bloom, seemed a picture of elegance. And Arigbeniri, clad in his black leather jacket, exuded a cool confidence, ready for whatever the day would bring.

Rochelle, ever the caring figure, glanced at the children and asked, “Children, are you ready to go?” Her voice was soft, but firm, a gentle command.

“Yes, we are,” Taylor replied, a glint of excitement in his eyes.

Flora, adjusting her jacket with a proud smile, added, “Hence are jackets on.”

Arimyriah, who had double-checked her outfit, chimed in, “And our shoes.”

“Now we are at the ready to visit the school,” Arigbeniri finished, his voice brimming with determination.

Dad, standing by the door in his green waterproof coat (minus the hood, a statement of practicality), reminded the children with a wink, “Remember, you are not staying for the whole day at school from 8:55 to 3:00, let alone from 8:55 to 3:20. So do not complain when you have to go home at lunchtime.”

Mum, always thinking ahead, added, “Dad may get McDonald’s for you on our way home.”

Dad raised an eyebrow and muttered to himself, shaking his head. “I did not plan to go to McDonald’s today. We have other

things to do, like visiting Matron Oja in Mitcham.” He paused, then added, “I will make something special for lunch today.”

Rochelle’s eyes narrowed, a playful warning in her voice. “If any of you cry for lunch, especially you, Taylor and Flora, you will be grounded this week. And if you scream and kick, you will be grounded all summer. Is that what you want?”

The children, hearing the sternness in Rochelle’s tone, quickly shook their heads in unison.

The adults nodded approvingly, and Rochelle, with a grin, softened her stance. “Then keep your promise and try not to get upset.”

“We will, we promise!” the children chorused, their voices filled with sincerity and determination.

And so, the Adhikaris and the Perry-Carters, two families intertwined by love and shared experiences, prepared to head out for the day. With their jackets on, their shoes laced tight, and their hearts full of promises, they ventured off, ready for the next chapter of their journey together.

As the morning sun rose higher, spilling its golden rays through the windows, the septet gathered at the front door of their home, ready to begin the day. The air was crisp with the anticipation of the journey ahead. Mum and Dad exchanged a quiet glance, a brief moment of teamwork before the chaos of the day took over.

Mum, with a soft but stern tone, asked, “Rochelle Jude Perry, did you make sure to put petrol in the car yesterday?”

Rochelle, ever the responsible one, nodded with a smile. “I did when we were returning from Locksbottom after visiting Joshua’s house. The tank is full and ready for the road.”

Flora, her face thoughtful as she adjusted her jacket, added, “Good. The final thing I want is for the car to break down while

we’re still far from the school. That would be such a disappointment, though I do love buses more than cars.” She sighed with a wistful smile, imagining the familiar clatter of a bus ride, her heart a little more drawn to the open road on wheels.

Rochelle laughed softly at Flora’s affection for buses before continuing, “Taylor, Flora, and Ari, I’ve got some news for you. Your new teacher for the year will be Mrs Spears. She’s moving from Bristol to Bredhurst in Kent for the job. She’s a lovely woman with long blonde hair and a warm, inviting Bristol accent. I know you’ll like her.”

Arigbeniri, listening intently, perked up when Rochelle spoke again, “And for you, Arigbeniri, your teacher will be Miss Berry. She has a beautiful Italian accent, and trust me, she will treat you like a pro. She’s got a lovely way about her.”

With that, the septet made their way outside, the familiar hum of the morning air filling their ears. The blue 2005 Vauxhall Zafira, parked neatly in the driveway, awaited them. Rochelle approached the car, her key in hand, and unlocked the door with a click that echoed in the quiet street. Behind the wheel, she slid into her seat with the confidence of someone accustomed to taking the reins.

The children settled in, each finding their spot in the middle row. Taylor and Arigbeniri claimed the back seats, their chatter bouncing off the windows. Mum nestled on the left, Flora in the middle, and Arimyriah on the right. With the family settled, Dad sat next to Rochelle, ready for the ride ahead.

Rochelle, now fully behind the wheel, turned the key and heard the engine hum to life, the sound like the start of a new adventure. “Alright, everyone, we’re off,” she said with a grin, her eyes focused on the road ahead as the car eased onto the street. The journey was about to begin, and the family was ready for whatever the day would bring.

As the day unfolded, the sun climbed higher, its golden warmth touching every corner of the car, a blue 2005 Vauxhall Zafira, now humming along the road. Behind the wheel sat Rochelle, with her hands firm on the steering wheel, her thoughts not on the car’s age but on the journey ahead. The wind rushed past as the family settled into their seats, and Rochelle shared a thought with her husband.

“My dear,” she said, glancing toward him with a playful grin, “you know, my husband is considering replacing this old Zafira with a sleek BMW X5. It’s about time, don’t you think? This one’s getting up there in years, but we’ve made do. When we bought this car in June, we made a deliberate choice. Neither of us had ever driven a seven-seater before, and if any of us accidently dented a newer car, the consequences would have been far more painful. This one feels like a trusty old friend.”

Mum’s voice then echoed through the car, sharp and clear, as she turned towards the children in the back seat.

“Now listen closely, children,” she said with a tone that carried a quiet authority. “You are only staying for half the school day today. I do not want to hear any complaints when it’s time to leave before lunch. Understood?”

The children, quiet and attentive, nodded obediently. They could feel the weight of the day ahead, and the promise of a new routine loomed large.

As the car journeyed through familiar streets, the rhythm of the wheels against the asphalt was like a steady heartbeat. They passed through Bromley South, Bromley Common, and Southborough, each turn taking them closer to their destination. The landscape shifted, but the car, like a faithful steed, kept moving forward. Petts Wood faded into the background, and Orpington High Street appeared like a signpost of things to come.

Dad, who had been quiet for a moment, broke the silence with a question for Arimyriah. His voice was calm, a steady anchor in the ebb and flow of their thoughts.

“Arimyriah,” he asked, glancing at her through the rear-view mirror, “can you see how far your school is?”

Arimyriah’s eyes sparkled with a quiet understanding, her answer bright and simple. “Yup!”

“Good,” Dad replied with a nod. “Just so you know, you can’t take the 61, 208, or 358 buses to your school. They don’t go directly there. You’ll have to find another way.”

Arimyriah did not argue. She knew her father’s words were true and accepted them with a calm acceptance that only a child facing the unknown could possess.

The mood shifted slightly as Taylor and Flora, who had been quiet for some time, spoke up in unison, their voices tinged with a slight nervousness.

“We’re a bit nervous about starting at Ramsden Hillview,” Taylor confessed, his voice soft but earnest. “When we started St James the Great in Peckham last September, we were nervous, too. We were the only New Zealanders there, and almost everyone else was black. It felt like we didn’t belong.”

Rochelle, with the wisdom of experience, turned her head slightly as she spoke to her children, her voice calm and reassuring, the hum of the engine adding a layer of warmth to her words.

“You see,” she explained, “in Peckham, black people have been living there for a long time. It’s natural that most of the students in the school would be black, and that’s perfectly fine. It doesn’t matter where you come from, whether you’re black, white, or anything else. What matters is how you treat others and how you let them treat you. You’ll get along just fine, I promise.”

The Adhikaris and the Perry-Carters continued their journey through the leafy streets of Bromley borough, the morning sun casting dappled patterns on the pavement as their blue Vauxhall Zafira purred smoothly down the road. Rochelle gripped the steering wheel with a confident air, her focus unwavering as she guided the car toward the school. Beside her, Dad adjusted his seatbelt and gazed out the window, a calm presence as always.

In the back, the children sat in a mix of excitement and quiet anticipation. The car’s gentle hum was occasionally interrupted by bursts of chatter, but soon a reflective silence settled as the New Zealander children absorbed their mother’s earlier words about the day ahead. The road ahead stretched like a metaphorical journey—new experiences waiting just beyond the horizon.

As they neared the school, a flicker of worry crossed Arimyriah’s face, her usually cheerful demeanor clouded by a small frown. She turned to her parents, her voice soft but tinged with concern.

“Mum, Dad, I am feeling a bit uneasy about missing my shows on Disney Junior, CBeebies, Nick Jr., and Nick Jr. 2. We will be out for most of today, and later, we are going to Matron’s house to say goodbye before she leaves for India.”

Mum twisted in her seat, her cream sleeveless jacket catching the morning light, and offered her daughter a reassuring smile. “Darling, you need not worry. Remember, we recorded all your favourite shows. With those recordings, no show is truly missed—they will be waiting for you whenever you are ready.”

Dad chimed in with his warm, steady tone. “Exactly, Arimyriah. You have turned your missing shows into unmissable ones. You can enjoy them once we are home and settled after visiting Matron. Focus on the day ahead—it will be full of wonderful moments too.”

Arimyriah considered their words, the crease in her brow easing as a smile began to bloom. “Fair enough,” she said softly, her worries melting away like early morning fog under the sun.

The car continued its journey, winding through the familiar streets of Bromley. The school loomed ahead, its cheerful brick façade welcoming the children as they prepared to take their first steps toward another adventure. Rochelle brought the car to a gentle stop, the engine’s hum fading as she turned to her passengers.

“Here we are, everyone,” she announced. “Let us make today a great one.”

As the Perry-Carters and the Adhikaris cruised through the streets of Bromley, Rochelle guided the family car—a dependable blue 2005 Vauxhall Zafira—with a steady hand. The engine hummed like a contented cat, and behind the wheel, Rochelle’s confidence shone as brightly as the morning sun. The car approached a stately building, its facade adorned with cheerful bricks and large windows that gleamed under the golden rays. Above the entrance, bold lettering in Sassoon Infant font proudly declared, Ramsden Hillview School.

The Zafira rolled to a gentle stop, its tires crunching softly against the gravel. “Alright, everyone, this is it,” Rochelle announced, her voice full of excitement. “Let’s get moving.”

With a symphony of clicks, the car doors opened, and the family stepped out, one by one. The children adjusted their jackets in the crisp air, their eyes widening as they took in the school’s grandeur. Led by Dad, the family marched toward the entrance with a sense of purpose, their steps echoing faintly on the clean pavement.

Once inside, they were greeted by the scent of freshly polished floors and the soft hum of activity in distant classrooms. They approached the Reception desk, where a welcoming figure with a kind smile waited.

“Good morning,” Dad began warmly. “May I ask your name?”

The woman straightened her posture and replied with a professional but friendly tone, “I am Ruth Kingston, the deputy head of Ramsden Hillview Primary School. Our headteacher,

Timothy Smith, or Tim as we call him, is unavailable at the moment.”

“Pleasure to meet you, Ruth,” the adults chimed in unison, their voices harmonious and sincere.

Ruth gestured to a stack of enrolment forms on the desk, her pen poised to take notes. “Now then, could you please share the names and dates of birth of the children enrolling this September?”

Rochelle stepped forward first, her tone as steady as her driving. “My son’s name is Taylor Perry,” she stated. “He was born on the 20th of November, 2004. My daughter is Flora Perry, and her birthday is the 7th of November, 2005.”

Ruth nodded, her pen gliding across the paper. “Taylor Perry, 20/11/2004. Flora Perry, 07/11/2005,” she repeated, her handwriting bold and precise, capturing the details in large, clear letters.

Mum stepped up next, her voice carrying the rich cadence of her Indian-Nigerian heritage. “My daughter is named Arimyriah Adhikari, just call her Ari for short,” she said. “She was born on the 17th of October, 2006. And my son is Arigbeniri, born on the 5th of January, 2008.”

“Wonderful,” Ruth replied, her pen once again moving swiftly. “Ari Adhikari, 17/10/2006. Arigbeniri Adhikari, 05/01/2008.”

The children stood quietly, absorbing their surroundings. The walls were adorned with colourful displays of student artwork, and a nearby bulletin board listed upcoming events in vibrant, playful fonts. Excitement buzzed in the air, blending with a faint nervousness that danced in their hearts.

“All set,” Ruth announced, setting down her pen with finality. “The forms are complete, and your children are officially on our roster. We look forward to seeing them here in September!”

The adults thanked her warmly, and the family exited the building, ready to tackle the rest of their day.

As Rochelle, Mum, and Dad exited Ramsden Hillview Primary School, Rochelle turned back to the children, her tone carrying a note of sternness.

“Remember, my dears,” she said, smoothing the hem of her pink jacket, “Be on your best behaviour. No tears, no tantrums, and no nonsense. Missteps will not be taken lightly.”

Before the children could respond, a woman with an energetic stride and a bright smile appeared in the doorway. She introduced herself as Ms. Sarah Smith, her long wavy dark brown hair catching the sunlight as she approached.

“Good morning, children,” Ms. Smith said warmly. “I am Ms. Smith, and since you have arrived earlier than expected, I will be giving you a special tour of the school. Come along now; there is much to see!”

The children, a mix of excitement and nerves, followed Ms. Smith into the building. Their steps echoed in the expansive hallway as they made their way to the gymnasium.

“This is the gym hall,” Ms. Smith announced, her voice resonating with pride. “It is not just for PE lessons but also where we gather for assembly and performances. It is a place where the magic of school life truly unfolds.”

The children’s eyes widened as they took in the high ceilings and polished floors. The space seemed alive with possibility, as though it were waiting to embrace their laughter and movement.

Next, Ms. Smith led them to the Reception corridor. The walls were adorned with children’s artwork, each piece a burst of colour and creativity. “Here we have the Reception classes,” she explained. “This is RR, and over here is RC. These doors lead to the toilets, and these pegs are where the youngest children hang their coats and bags.”

The group stepped back into the main hallway, their footsteps muffled by the thick carpet. Ms. Smith gestured to a cosy room with shelves lined with books. “This is our library,” she said. “A sanctuary of stories, where children can borrow and return books.”

Flora, ever honest and observant, tilted her head. “It looks a bit plain,” she remarked.

Ms. Smith chuckled, her eyes crinkling at the corners. “You are right, Flora. It could use a splash of colour. Perhaps you will help us bring it to life when you join us in September.”

Their journey continued into the Year 1 corridor, where Ms. Smith gestured to the doors on either side. “This is the Year 1 area,” she said. “Here is 1R, and over here is 1C. And of course, we have the toilets and more pegs for the children.”

The group moved down the bright corridor, the faint scent of freshly sharpened pencils lingering in the air. They arrived at the Year 2 section, where Ms. Smith pointed out the classrooms. “This is the Year 2 corridor. On your left is 2R, and on your right

is 2C. These are the pegs for Year 2 children, and here are the boys’ and girls’ toilets.”

The children absorbed every word, their imaginations painting scenes of what their new school life might look like. The tour was a whirlwind of discovery, each room and corridor hinting at the adventures to come.

The Perry-Carters and Adhikaris stood in awe as the tour continued, their guide Ms. Sarah Smith leading the way through the maze of Ramsden Hillview Primary School. The faint scent of polished floors and new paint filled the air, mingling with the faint hum of distant voices echoing down the long corridors.

Taylor tilted his head, his curiosity spilling into a question. “Ms. Smith, where are the junior classrooms located?” His tone carried both wonder and impatience.

Ms. Smith smiled warmly and gestured ahead. “Upstairs, Taylor. The Year 3 classrooms are on the second floor. But for now, let me show you the main hall. This grand space serves as a stage

for assemblies, a place for physical education, and, of course, the dining hall where young appetites are satisfied.”

As they stepped into the hall, the children’s eyes widened. The gleaming floors seemed to stretch forever, reflecting the bright midday light spilling in through tall windows. The smell of distant school lunches wafted through the space, a blend of mystery meat and baked bread.

Ms. Smith led them through the hall and into a corridor. There, she paused by the lift. “Now, girls, we’ll take the lift to the second floor. Boys, you’ll take the stairs past the Year 5 classrooms. Let’s meet at the top.”

Taylor and Arigbeniri exchanged glances, eager to conquer the staircase. Meanwhile, Flora, Arimyriah, and Ms. Smith stepped into the lift, their excitement rising as they ascended.

On the second floor, the group reunited near the Year 3 corridor. Ms. Smith explained with a sweep of her hand, “This is where Year 3 resides now, but come September, it will transform into

the Year 5 corridor. Older students will claim these halls, as they ascend to new heights.”

Flora’s eyebrows rose at the thought. “It’s fascinating to think of a corridor swap, almost like it’s growing up along with the students.”

“Indeed,” Ms. Smith chuckled, appreciating Flora’s observation. “Now, follow me. There is much more to see.”

The tour continued, weaving through the school’s many layers. From the Year 4 corridor, where laughter and learning would intertwine, to the Year 5 classrooms, filled with the promise of new challenges. Downstairs, they marvelled at the Year 6 wing, the final step before the students would soar into secondary school.

The children’s eyes lit up as Ms. Smith showed them the playgrounds, where swings swayed gently in the breeze and laughter echoed from the distant play area. They wandered past the garden, vibrant with life, and the sprawling field where games would unfold under wide blue skies.

Inside, the ICT suite gleamed with rows of computers, waiting to unlock digital adventures, and the phonics room radiated a sense of promise, its shelves lined with bright books to ignite young imaginations.

Finally, Ms. Smith led them to their proposed classrooms, Rose and Clover. “These will be your spaces to learn, grow, and thrive,” she said, her voice warm with encouragement. The children exchanged eager looks, their minds racing with the possibilities of the year ahead.

Ms Smith, with a voice as steady as a metronome, clapped her hands gently to gain the children’s attention. “Alright, everyone, the clock strikes 8:55. It is time for you to explore your new classes and meet your teachers. A big day awaits!”

Taylor, Flora, and Arimyriah exchanged a glance filled with anticipation as they were directed to Rose Class, while young Arigbeniri was guided towards Clover Class. The halls, alive with the murmur of other students, felt like rivers carrying them to new destinations, each corner teeming with opportunities.

Inside Rose Class, a curious mix of personalities awaited. Seven boys of varying ages filled the room with an air of mischief and camaraderie. Among them was Jack, an 11-year-old who seemed to hold the unspoken title of the group’s ringleader, and Daniel Tedcastle, also 11, whose sharp wit kept everyone on their toes.

The slightly younger boys included Julian, a 9-year-old with a thoughtful demeanor, and Dean, whose energy was like an untamed breeze. Then there was Bradley, another 9-year-old whose quick laughter echoed frequently, as well as Daniel Revell and James, both 8, who shared a bond that could only come from countless shared jokes and adventures.

Three staff members oversaw this lively lot. At the helm was Mr Peter Ashworth, a 42-year-old teacher with kind eyes but a touch of sadness, for he would soon be leaving to take up a new position in Portsmouth. Assisting him were Mrs Dorothy “Dot” Hawkins, a 53-year-old woman whose no-nonsense manner was softened by her warm heart, and Mr Edward “Teddy” James, a cheerful 38-year-old Scotsman who could charm even the most reluctant student.

Taylor, Flora, and Arimyriah entered nervously but were met with encouraging smiles and welcoming words.

Meanwhile, Arigbeniri found himself in Clover Class, a smaller but equally vibrant setting. Four girls brought colour to the room: Georgina and Sharlene “Sharlie”, both 7, radiated enthusiasm, while the youngest members were 5-year-old Norwegian twins, Astrid and Charlotte “Charley”, whose golden curls seemed to bounce with excitement.

Two boys balanced the mix. Dramou, aged 7, had a quiet confidence, and Connor, at 6, clung to a stuffed toy for comfort.

Their teachers were a fascinating trio. Miss Jasmine “Jaz” Berry, the lead teacher, spoke with an Italian lilt that brought a touch of musicality to her words. Her elegance and warmth made her instantly likeable. Mrs Maria Chester, 35, born without a right arm, was an inspiring figure of resilience and determination. Completing the team was Mrs Michelle Hanwell, a 46-year-old Australian whose sunny demeanor made her a beacon of positivity.

Arigbeniri quickly felt at ease as the adults introduced themselves and explained the day’s plans.

As the children settled into their respective classrooms, the morning sunlight streamed through the windows, casting golden rays on new beginnings. Friendships waited to be forged, lessons to be learned, and memories to be made.

The adults, watching from the doorways, exchanged smiles. They knew this was not just the start of a school term but the start of something much greater—a chapter of growth, discovery, and adventure for their beloved children.

The Noyes family, led by the thoughtful Mike and Leah, stepped into the school for the first time, eager to see what lay ahead. Matthew, their bright 7-year-old son with a mop of black curly hair, and his younger sister, the lively 4-year-old Francesca “Frankie”, were excited about the visit. They both wore wide smiles as they clutched their parents’ hands, looking forward to meeting the teachers and exploring the classrooms.

They were greeted by Mr. Ashworth, the teacher of Rose Class, who had been expecting them. With a warm smile, he welcomed them into the school. “Hello, Matthew and Frankie,” he said kindly. “I understand you’re here for a visit today. Why are you considering moving to our school?”

Matthew spoke up with quiet confidence, his words measured but clear. “I’m Matthew Noyes. I’m from Raglan, and my parents and the staff there think I’ve outgrown my current unit. They think I’m ready for more advanced work, and this school seems like the right place for me. I’ve been doing Year 2 work, and they feel I should join a more suitable class.”

Mr. Ashworth nodded thoughtfully. “That makes sense, Matthew. It’s wonderful that you’re already progressing to Year 2 work! How about you, Frankie?” he asked, looking down at the eager 4-year-old.

Frankie piped up with enthusiasm. “I’m just here to see the school! I want to play and see all the fun things.” She giggled, her excitement palpable.

“Well, I’m glad you’re both here,” Mr. Ashworth said with a smile. “You’re welcome to stay with the class until 10:45 and interact with the children. Let me show you around.”

The children were thrilled at the chance to explore. The classroom buzzed with activity as the students engaged in various hands-on tasks. Jack and Daniel Tedcastle were deeply focused on piecing together a large puzzle, their concentration evident as they worked together to complete the picture. Julian sat at the computer, typing away and exploring the interactive lessons, while Dean, Taylor, and Bradley were engrossed in colouring a large picture of a grand castle. Flora, Daniel Revell, and James were each exploring the wonders of their iPads, captivated by their digital adventures. Meanwhile, Matthew, Arimyriah, and Frankie had gathered around the polydron set, building towering structures with the colourful pieces.

Mrs. Hawkins and Mr. James, the teaching assistants, were present, guiding and assisting the children as needed. Mrs. Hawkins turned to her colleague, Mr. James, and said, “Ella Rowe, a girl from Crofton Infant School, was supposed to join us today, but she’s not here.”

Flora, pausing in her colouring, asked, “Why isn’t she here?”

Mr. James explained, “Ella isn’t feeling well. She has the flu and is staying in bed to rest today.”

Taylor, always the empathetic one, frowned. “Aw, that’s sad. When will we see her?”

Mr. Ashworth, who had overheard the conversation, spoke up, his tone tinged with a bit of sadness. “You’ll meet Ella in September. But I won’t be here to see her. I’m leaving the school. I’m finding London too rough, and South-East Outer London has its challenges, so I’m moving to Portsmouth for a fresh start.”

Arimyriah, always sensitive to change, sighed deeply. “That’s really disappointing,” she said softly.

Mr. Ashworth nodded, his expression reflecting the same sentiment. “I know, Ari. Change can be hard, but sometimes it’s the right thing to do. You’ll all be okay, and so will I.”

The children, though disappointed by the news, continued to enjoy their time at the school, playing and learning together. The day was filled with excitement about the new school year but also the bittersweet feeling of knowing things would soon change. The future was full of possibilities, and although goodbyes were inevitable, the memories of this day would stay with them.

At precisely 10:15, Mr. James ushered Taylor, Flora, and Arimyriah into the neighbouring Clover Class, where Arigbeniri would soon call home. The classroom buzzed with activity, a vivid tapestry of childhood exploration. Georgina, Dramou, and Sharlie busied themselves at the easel, their brushes gliding across the canvas in bold, colourful strokes. Nearby, Connor and Arigbeniri sculpted shapes from soft playdough, their laughter mingling with the gentle hum of creativity. Meanwhile, Astrid and Charley were deeply engrossed in their pretend shop, exchanging imaginary coins for invisible goods.

At the heart of it all, Miss Berry, poised at her computer, worked intently. The clatter of keys added a rhythmic backdrop to the scene, while Mrs. Chester and Mrs. Hanwell sat nearby, meticulously writing reports, their pens dancing across the paper.

Miss Berry glanced up with a welcoming smile. “Come September, I will be greeting three new reception boys—Lukas, Victor, and Harry—all hailing from Robin’s Den Pre-School. Unfortunately, their school had to close because of dwindling numbers, which had been a problem for some time.”

Mrs. Chester rose from her seat and turned to the children. “Would any of you like to try some painting?”

Taylor, Flora, and Arimyriah responded in unison, their faces lighting up with excitement. “Yes, please!”

Mrs. Hanwell chuckled warmly and retrieved three oversized, paint-splattered overalls. “Here you go,” she said, handing them the garments. “Slip these on, and you’re ready to create.”

The children eagerly donned the old clothes and approached the easel. A blank canvas awaited, brimming with possibility. They started with the primary colours: bold red, cheerful yellow, and deep blue. Each stroke brought life to the canvas, the vibrant hues merging as the children’s imaginations took flight.

“Let’s see what happens when we mix these,” Taylor suggested, dipping his brush into the red and yellow. The colours swirled together, forming a bright, fiery orange.

Flora added blue to red, creating a regal violet that shimmered with depth. “This is magical!” she exclaimed.

Arimyriah, ever the experimenter, mixed yellow and blue to conjure a lively green. “Now let’s make a rainbow,” she declared. Together, they painted an arc of colours that stretched across the canvas like a bridge to another world.

But their creativity didn’t stop there. With a spark of inspiration, Arimyriah combined red with white, producing a soft, delicate pink. She named it rose, the hue blooming like a flower on the canvas.

From secondary colours, they ventured into tertiary realms. Orange mixed with yellow became a warm mustard, while orange blended with red created a bold, fiery red-orange. Red and purple swirled together to form a rich burgundy, deep and velvety. Purple met blue to create an inky indigo, mysterious and shadowy.

Their exploration continued: yellow and green became a zesty lime, while blue and green swirled into a tranquil turquoise. Red and pink gave birth to vibrant fuchsia, and white mixed with pink softened into a gentle rosy tone.

“Mixing colours is like discovering hidden treasures,” Arimyriah said with a grin. “It’s fun to make something completely new.”

By the time they stepped back to admire their work, the easel had transformed into a vivid masterpiece, a symphony of colours born from their boundless curiosity and collaboration.

As the children finished their vibrant masterpiece, the room buzzed with the energy of a morning well spent. Arimyriah glanced down at her overalls, now streaked with dashes of burgundy and fuchsia, and noticed a small blotch of indigo paint on her shirt. She sighed, but her grin returned quickly as Mr. James approached the easel, his eyes wide with admiration.

“This is truly a stunning creation,” he said, his voice warm with approval. “You’ve worked magic with primary, secondary, and even tertiary colours. But now, it’s time for everyone to take a break and stretch their legs on the playground. For some, it’s also time to say goodbye.”

The children exchanged looks of curiosity and excitement as they tidied their space. Outside the classroom, the Ashworth family stood near the door, preparing to leave.

“Bye, Matthew,” Mr. Ashworth said with a firm yet gentle tone. “Have fun back at your old school.”

Flora tilted her head in curiosity. “Where’s Matthew going?”

“He’s returning to his old school in Bromley Common,” Mr. Ashworth replied, his smile tinged with nostalgia.

Nearby, another family bid farewell. “Bye, Frankie,” Mr. Ashworth added.

Taylor’s inquisitive nature sparked. “Where’s Frankie going?”

“She’s off to visit a different school,” came the reply, leaving Taylor and Flora nodding thoughtfully.

The children flowed from their classrooms like a cheerful river, their chatter echoing through the corridors. Reception students remained in Clover Class, while the Year 1 children headed to the infant playground. Further on, the older children from Year 2 to Year 6 made their way to the junior playground.

The infant playground was a lively scene, with Year 1 students clustering in groups. Miss Victoria “Vicki” Goldsmith, the supervisor, moved between them, her sunny disposition encouraging connection and play. She smiled warmly as the children shared their morning experiences, their small voices filling the air with laughter.

Meanwhile, the junior playground was a bustling hub of activity. Children from Years 2 to 6 mingled and exchanged animated conversations under the watchful eye of Miss Rebecca Harte. Her calm and approachable demeanour made the older children feel at ease as they formed teams for quick games or chatted about their plans for the weekend.

Fifteen minutes passed quickly, and the two supervisors rang their respective bells, their tones cutting through the playground’s hum. The children hurriedly lined up, their energy redirected toward the next lesson. As the lines formed, the playgrounds emptied, leaving behind only the echoes of joy and the promise of more adventures to come.

The morning sunlight streamed into the Rose Class corridor as the children lined up in perfect alphabetical order, their chatter echoing softly against the walls. Excitement buzzed through the air, but the moment was interrupted when Bradley, the most energetic of the group, accidently bumped his head on the edge of the classroom door.

Bradley clutched his forehead, his voice rising in pain. “Owwww! I’ve literally hurt my head!” he wailed, his face scrunched up as tears spilled freely.

Mr Ashworth, their patient and kind teacher, hurried over with a concerned expression. “What’s wrong, Bradley?” he asked, crouching to the child’s level.

Through sobs, Bradley repeated, “I’ve literally hurt my head!”

Mr Ashworth examined the spot carefully and gave the boy a reassuring pat. “You’ve given yourself a hard knock, Brad, but there’s no need to worry. It’s nothing serious. You’ll be fine.”

Relieved but still sniffling, Bradley rejoined the line, clutching his head for comfort.

Inside the classroom, the children were greeted by the warm sight of colourful posters lining the walls, with artwork from past projects displayed proudly. They settled into their circle time seats, their curious eyes darting towards three unfamiliar faces.

Mr Ashworth stood before them, his tone cheerful and welcoming. “Right, everyone, as you all know, today is a very special day. We have three visitors from different schools who are here to see what it’s like to join Rose Class in September.”

He gestured to the newcomers. “Please say hello to Ari, Flora, and Taylor.”

The seven boys in the class, dressed in their neat uniforms, turned towards the trio and chorused politely, “Hello, Ari, Flora, and Taylor.”

The three newcomers, feeling slightly shy but smiling warmly, responded together, “Hello, boys.”

The introductions marked the beginning of a new chapter, as the children began to blend their colourful personalities—just like the vibrant colours they had painted earlier—red, yellow, and blue mixing into secondary shades of orange, green, and purple, and further her swirling into tertiary hues like mustard, turquoise, and fuchsia.

In the bright and lively Rose Class, Mr Ashworth clapped his hands to draw the children’s attention. The room, already buzzing with excitement, fell silent as he smiled warmly at the group. His voice carried a sense of anticipation.

“Before we sing our hello song,” he began, his eyes resting on the three new faces, “I’d like to ask our visiting friends what house they would like to join when they start here in September. Now, Ari,” he said, addressing Arimyriah with a gentle tone, “which house would you like to be in? There’s Garnet, the red house; Emerald, the green house; Sapphire, the blue house; and Topaz, the yellow house.”

Arimyriah tilted her head in thought before responding decisively. “I want all of us to be in Garnet because red is one of my favourite colours.” Her eyes lit up with enthusiasm as she imagined being part of the house represented by such a vibrant shade.

Mr Ashworth nodded. “A wonderful choice! Red is a strong and bold colour. I’ll make sure Mrs Spears knows you’d like to be in Garnet house.”

With the decision made, Mr Ashworth turned his focus back to the whole class. “Now, everyone, it’s time for the hello song. We’ll start with Jack.”

The children formed a circle, their chairs forming a neat ring. Mr Ashworth led the melody, his voice steady and welcoming.

Hello Song lyrics:

Hello (name),

Hello (name),

Hello (name),

How are you today?

Each child was named in turn, from Jack, the oldest, to Arimyriah, the youngest visitor. Their names echoed warmly around the room, each child lighting up as they heard their name sung. Even the visiting children, initially shy, smiled and waved as their turns came, feeling welcomed into this new environment.

With the song complete, the room transitioned into a hub of activity. Tables were soon covered with vibrant art supplies, books, and puzzles. The children scattered across the room, engaging in fun and educational activities designed to encourage creativity and teamwork.

In the cheerful, sun-drenched classroom of Rose Class, Arimyriah’s heart fluttered with excitement as she carefully selected a book from the shelf. It was a familiar title, one she had read before, but each time it felt as fresh as the first. She carried Oxford Reading Tree - Stage 4, The Wedding, written by Roderick Hunt and illustrated by Alex Brychta, with the utmost care, its bright cover promising new adventures. The illustrations, painted in vivid hues of red, blue, yellow, and green, seemed to beckon her into the story. With a wide smile, she approached Mrs Hawkins, the gentle, attentive teaching assistant, and handed her the book.

“Let’s read,” Arimyriah said, her voice brimming with anticipation.

Mrs Hawkins, who had just adjusted her glasses, looked at Arimyriah with a soft smile. “Okay,” she replied warmly. With a swift flip of the first page, the story unfolded before them. The children were whisked away to the wedding festivities, where every detail of the illustrations burst with colour—from the cheerful reds of the flower arrangements to the golden yellows of the wedding cake.

Together, Arimyriah and Mrs Hawkins journeyed through the story, with the pictures leaping off the page, dancing with every

word spoken. The gentle rhythm of Mrs Hawkins' voice made the book come to life, her words as vivid as the colours in the pictures.

As they reached the last page, Mr Ashworth entered the room, a stack of books in his hands. His presence always brought a calm sense of order, and today was no different. With a smile, he handed three transition books to Taylor, Flora, and Arimyriah, each one brimming with images and details about their new school journey.

"These are your transition books," Mr Ashworth explained, his voice steady and clear. "They will guide you through everything you will see when you start here in September."

Arimyriah's eyes twinkled as she opened her transition book. She saw a picture of the school on the cover, the grand building with its welcoming doors and vibrant classrooms. Her gaze skipped to the page that described Rose Class, her new classroom, and she couldn't help but feel a twinge of excitement. As she flipped through the pages, she noticed the sections about her new uniform—burgundy cardigans and jumpers, grey skirts and pinafores, and tights and socks in matching grey. The deep burgundy ties with fine white stripes completed the look, making her feel as if she were stepping into a world of learning and friendship.

The transition book guided her step by step, showing her the playground where she would play, the gym hall where she would do PE, and the main hall where she would gather for assemblies and lunch. It was all so real, yet so new. Arimyriah smiled to herself, her heart already racing with excitement.

Meanwhile, in Clover Class, Arigbeniri was having his own special moment. The children were busy with puzzles, reading books, and playing with playdough, their laughter filling the room. Miss Berry, with her gentle hands and kind eyes, approached Arigbeniri with a transition book of his own. She handed it to him with a reassuring smile, understanding the importance of these little steps in his journey.

Arigbeniri’s transition book mirrored Arimyriah’s, but it was tailored to his new adventure. His teacher, Miss Berry, would guide him through Clover Class, just as Mrs Spears would guide Arimyriah. His book showed him all the places he would go—his classroom with its warm, welcoming atmosphere, the infant playground where he would make new friends, and the gym hall where he would play. There were pictures of the grey trousers, the burgundy jumper, and even the grey tights and socks, just like those of Arimyriah. His eyes shone with curiosity as he traced the pages, his heart fluttering with the thought of the new experiences awaiting him.

At Ramsden Hillview Primary School, the sun was beginning to dip low in the sky, casting a golden hue over the classrooms. In Rose Class, Mrs Hawkins stood with a thoughtful expression on her face, her glasses perched at the end of her nose. It was a momentous day for Taylor, Flora, and Arimyriah—three young souls about to transition into new chapters of their educational journey.

“Taylor, Flora, and Ari,” Mrs Hawkins called gently, her voice carrying the warmth of someone who had nurtured them throughout their visit. “Your parents are here to take you home.

But before you go, I need to ask—what year will you be transitioning into?”

Taylor, with his blonde hair ruffled by his fingers, glanced up, his face filled with a mix of excitement and nerves. He gave a small shrug, the question lingering in the air like a promise. “Year 5,” he answered, his voice calm, as though he already belonged there.

Mrs Hawkins smiled warmly at him before turning her attention to Flora, who was busily adjusting her right pigtail. The tidy strands were perfectly positioned, just as Flora liked them. “And you, Flora?” Mrs Hawkins asked, her eyes twinkling with curiosity.

Flora smiled confidently, her voice sweet yet determined. “Year 4,” she replied, as though it was already written in the stars.

Finally, Mrs Hawkins’s gaze settled on Arimyriah, who sat quietly, her red uniform a bright splash of colour in the classroom. A sneeze interrupted the stillness before Arimyriah could speak, her eyes twinkling mischievously as she wiped her nose. “Year 3,” she replied, her voice playful and confident, as if she had already claimed the next year as her own.

Mrs Hawkins chuckled softly. “Bless you, Ari,” she said before continuing. “Now, I will speak to Mrs Spears in September to ensure you all have your appropriate reading records. Ari and Flora, you will receive an orange reading record, and Taylor, you will receive a violet one, all based on your year groups. You will also be sitting with children from your year groups—Ari, with the Year 3s; Flora, with the Year 4s; and Taylor, with the Year 5s and

6s. As there is only one boy transitioning into Year 6, there won’t be a separate table for just one.”

Julian, who had been silently observing the proceedings from a corner of the room, raised his hand with a grin. “That’s me,” he said, proudly puffing out his chest as the others turned to look at him.

“I know, Julian,” Mrs Hawkins replied, smiling fondly at him. “Now, let’s go meet your parents.”

With that, Mrs Hawkins ushered Taylor, Flora, and Arimyriah to the front of the school. Outside, Mrs Chester was there, her presence calming as she gently led Arigbeniri by the hand. The two children, still wearing their old school uniforms—Taylor and Flora in their blue outfits from their previous school in New Zealand, and Arimyriah in her red attire from her old school—couldn’t help but feel a flutter of excitement as they walked towards their parents.

Mrs Chester glanced at Arigbeniri, her eyes kind yet expectant. “And what year will you start, Arigbeniri?” she asked with a knowing smile.

Arigbeniri, adjusting his small glasses with a gesture that had become his trademark, answered confidently, “Year 2.”

“Ah, Year 2,” Mrs Chester repeated, nodding in approval. “You’ll get a green reading record for that.”

As they approached the gates of the school, Taylor’s nose twitched at the familiar, mouth-watering smell wafting from the school kitchen. He looked up at Flora, his face lighting up with curiosity. “The lunch smells really good,” he said, practically salivating. “I think it’s pizza!”

Flora, ever the inquisitive one, looked at Mrs Chester with wide eyes and a hopeful expression. “Please may we stay for lunch today?” she asked, her voice laced with anticipation. “I want to have some of the lovely pizza!”

Mrs Chester gave them both a warm but firm smile. “Not today, dears,” she said gently. “In September, when you’re joining us full-time, you can enjoy lunch with us. But for today, as you’ve only come for a visit, you’ll need to wait a little longer.”

Taylor and Flora groaned in unison, their disappointment visible on their faces. But neither of them argued. They understood that this visit was just the beginning, and soon enough, they would be back for more.

At Ramsden Hillview Primary School, the day had flown by in a whirl of new experiences. It was now 12:15 pm, and Mrs Hawkins, always the picture of calm, was guiding the four children out of Rose Class with Mrs Chester at her side. The pair of teachers were walking alongside Taylor, Flora, Arimyriah, and Arigbeniri, who had all spent the day getting a taste of what school life here was like. Their uniformed footsteps echoed softly as they approached the main reception, where their parents awaited eagerly.

Mrs Chester spoke first, her voice filled with pride. “Arigbeniri had a wonderful day today. He met some other children and interacted really well with them,” she said, smiling down at the little boy in his red school uniform, who had been beaming throughout the visit.

“That’s good to know,” Dad, replied, his Indian heritage reflected in the warmth of his smile and the pride in his voice.

Mrs Hawkins turned to the Adhikari family, her own smile just as warm. “Arimyriah has been good from the start right until now,” she continued. “Ms Smith guided her and the others around the school, showing them all the important places.”

“How kind of her,” Mrs. Adhikari responded, her voice carrying a hint of gratitude, as she looked at her daughter, who was still clutching her transition book tightly in her hands. Mrs Hawkins gave a small nod before turning to the New Zealanders. “Taylor and Flora have both been wonderful—very well-behaved—and they’ve even made some lovely colours using primary colours and white today.”

“So creative,” Rochelle, Taylor and Flora’s mum, added with a proud smile, clearly impressed with how the children had embraced their first visit. “Now, let’s head to the car, shall we?” Rochelle said, guiding the children out of the building with one last look at the school’s bright corridors.

As they stepped outside, Arimyriah’s stomach gave a loud rumble. She glanced at her transition book, and then at her brother’s, her face suddenly clouded with worry. A tear slipped down her cheek as her emotions began to overflow.

“Arimyriah, what’s the matter?” her mum asked gently, noticing the change in her daughter’s demeanour. With a shaky breath, Arimyriah walked to the car, her voice quivering as she repeated her worries. “I want my teacher to be Miss Berry and not Mrs Spears. And I’m hungry now. I want lunch,” she said, her words tumbling out over and over.

As they all settled into the car—Taylor and Arigbeniri in the back seats, Rochelle on the left side of the middle row, Flora beside her, and Arimyriah on the right—her mum and dad in the front—there was a brief moment of silence before Flora spoke up, trying to ease her friend’s distress.

“Ari, this isn’t our school yet,” Flora said, her tone gentle yet firm. “When you start in early September, you’ll have lunch at school.” Taylor nodded in agreement, his voice warm and reassuring. “And Mrs Spears is really lovely. She’s from Bristol, you know? Very nice lady.”

Rochelle smiled at the two children. “Your dad will buy something from McDonald’s, or maybe make something special for lunch when we get home,” she offered, trying to soothe the situation. Arimyriah’s eyes glistened with unshed tears as she wiped her cheeks. “But I want to eat now,” she whispered.

Mum sighed softly, glancing down at her daughter’s school uniform, which had already been stained with paint once again. “Arimyriah, this is the second shirt you’ve accidentally stained with paint,” she remarked gently but with a note of concern in her voice.

Dad, always the calm anchor in the midst of chaos, chuckled softly. “I’ll pop into McDonald’s and grab myself a Big Mac and an apple pie. Nothing more,” he said, trying to lighten the mood. Arimyriah sniffled, but her tears began to subside as she processed the comforting words. Her dad’s voice was soothing, and she felt a small wave of relief. “But don’t worry, sweetie,” he continued, “I’ll make something special for everyone when we get home for lunch.”

At this, Arimyriah wiped her tears away and looked up at her parents, her face brightening slightly. “I feel a little better now,” she said, her brown eyes still glistening but now filled with a hint of calm. As the car pulled away from the school, the warm September sun shining down on them, the family settled into a comfortable silence, each of them reflecting on the new beginnings that lay ahead. They might not have been in their new school yet, but they were closer than ever to this exciting next chapter in their lives.

THE END